SUNBEAM STORIES

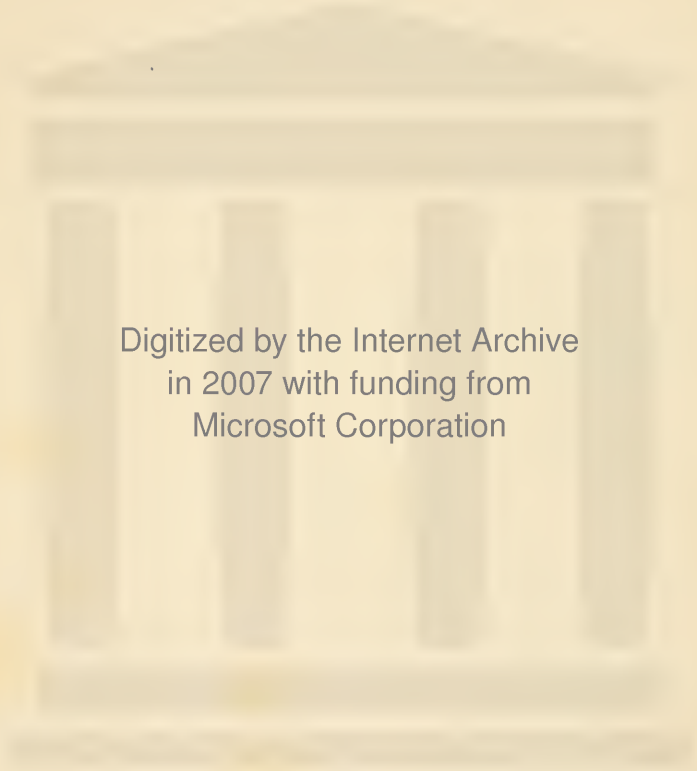
by ANNIE FLINT

DESIGNS BY DORA WHEELER KEITH

1. No subject

Mary Hale Cunningham.
from
Aunt Cecy.

January 11 – 1898.



"THE SUNBEAM'S SPARKLING FACE PEEPING OVER HER SHOULDER."

Sunbeam Stories and others by Annie Flint

Illustrated by : : : : :
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To

HAROLD GOULD HENDERSON, JR.

A Life-long Friend of Seven Years

I Dedicate these Stories

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

"The gay motes that people the sunbeams."—MILTON.

An Escapade

An Escapade

I'LL never play with you again; and if you touch my new dolly, or any of my dolls, if you look at the pink bed-room in my play-house, I'll knock Eleanor Fitz-Gerald LeRoy's head against the wall until it breaks, and then I'll pull her wig off, too, so there!"

"Why, Nelly, Nelly, you naughty girl! Is that the way you speak to your little cousin when she tries to play with you? Come to me immediately. We must have a talk together."

Poor Kitty had taken refuge in the furthest corner of the nursery, with Eleanor Fitz-Gerald LeRoy tightly clasped against her frightened heart. Nelly was standing in the middle of the room swinging Clarence Albert Montgomery by one worsted leg when Mamma appeared in the doorway. Mamma's gentle voice seldom took that tone, and Nelly's eyes fell as they met her mother's sad, disappointed gaze.

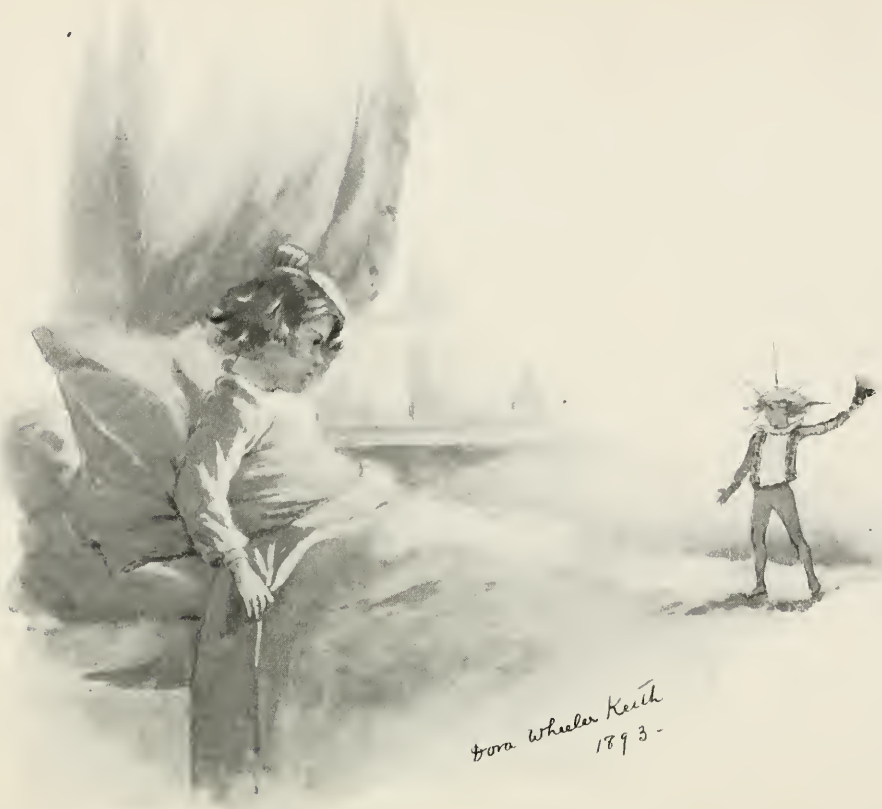
"Nelly," said Mamma quietly, but sorrowfully, "Look at this little girl in front of you, and tell me what you think of her."

Mamma had led Nelly out of the nursery, so that when the child raised her eyes she saw her face in the mirror over Mamma's dressing-table, —the crossest face you can imagine: a little girl with torn apron, tangled curls, a red, turned-up nose, swollen eyelids, and a mouth all twisted ready to cry again.

"Nelly," said Mamma, after a moment, "do you remember what a happy day you had last Wednesday when you played with Kitty at Aunt Mary's house? How delighted you were when auntie gave you Clarence Albert Montgomery, telling you she had made him and dressed him with her own hands! She did not keep him until your birthday, because she wanted you to enjoy him that day while you were playing with Kitty. Suppose Kitty had tried to tear Clarence to pieces, and had refused to let you touch her toys?"

"Mamma, this is my home. When Kitty comes to visit me she must play the games I want to play. I don't love Kitty a bit, and I think Kitty's dolly is prettier than Clarence. I want Kitty to go ho-ho-o-ome," sobbed Nelly harder than ever.

"O Nelly!" said Mamma, "I am so ashamed of my naughty little girl! It is only three o'clock, but I must send you to bed. Ellen, come here, and put Miss Nelly to bed. You may bring her supper at six o'clock, but no one is to go to her or



"SUDDENLY ONE OF THE SUNBEAMS DROPPED UPON THE BED."

to speak to her until she is good." Then Mamma left the room without another look at Nelly.

"I don't care," said Nelly.

After Ellen was gone, however, it was lonely to have nothing better to do than to lie watching the provokingly happy Sunbeams dancing on the opposite wall, as if they were laughing at the idea of a little girl's being in bed on a beautiful summer day.

What irritating Sunbeams they were! Nelly could not resist watching them with the greatest interest, although they teased her, and every now and then flashed a ray of light into her eyes to make her blink and turn her head away. They seemed to be playing a game; for one sparkling Sunbeam, who had been dancing impatiently up and down on a panel of the bedroom door, suddenly flashed over to the wall, jumped on a group of Sunbeams hustled together in a corner, and made them scramble up to the ceiling, scattering them in all directions.

"Oh, how pretty!" cried Nelly, forgetting her bad temper, and sitting up in bed much excited.

Suddenly one of the Sunbeams dropped upon the bed, ran along the quilt, and jumped on Nelly's hand.

"Oh!" cried Nelly again, and then stared in surprise.

Now that the Sunbeam was on her hand she could see plainly that the dancing spot of light was, in fact, the queerest little creature of which anybody could ever have dreamed.

As Nelly had never looked at a Sunbeam closely before, she would have been much frightened; but it was so funny to see a Sunbeam crying that the child burst out laughing, all the naughtiness rushed out of her heart, and she felt good-natured and happy once more.

The Sunbeam, however, was really crying. Sparkling tears ran down his shining face, and flashed into tiny diamonds on his glittering jacket; his sobs sounded like the tinkling of a silver bell. You see, it is impossible for a Sunbeam to look unhappy, but when he heard Nelly laugh at the funny spectacle, he drew himself to his full height, and darted so bright a look of scorn at her that she quickly covered her eyes with her hand. When she took away her fingers the changeable little fellow was seated cross-legged on the bedspread, smiling at her cheerfully.

"I think it was unkind to laugh at me when I was crying, Nelly," said the Sunbeam, with so jolly a smile that Nelly did not feel at all afraid of him.

"Please, excuse me," she answered politely. "I never saw a Sunbeam near by before, and it was funny to see you bright and sparkling when you

were crying. Tell me, what was the matter? I'm sure you must have been miserable to cry, because you look as if you were always happy."

"I've been naughty," whispered the Sunbeam, glancing over his shoulder to see if his companions were still dancing on the wall unmindful of his absence.

"Oh! have you?" replied Nelly, with a blush of shame, remembering her own misdeeds.

"Yes," continued the Sunbeam, "I always enjoy teasing the other Sunbeams, and try to make them stay out late, when the Sun—our father, you know—is ready to set and wants us to come home. I do love the summer! The days are warm and beautiful, and we can dance and play until late in the afternoon. But generally," said the Sunbeam, mournfully, as if he understood his wickedness and regretted it with all his heart, "generally, in fact, nearly every lovely summer evening, I feel gayer, brighter, and less like going to bed than ever, so I coax most of the others to run away with me. We dance into pretty houses and hide in the rooms; we waltz in and out among the leaves of the trees; we hide in flower petals; we creep under little brown stones in the brooks; we try to lose ourselves in the tall grass, but the Sun always finds us and draws us home. Perhaps you have noticed how red his face grows while he is still looking for us and cannot

catch us. He always goes to bed angry in summer, always, always," and the Bad Little Sunbeam seemed quite grieved for a moment, and then rolled over the bed quivering with merriment, sparkling, brilliant, darting hundreds of rays, till Nelly was winking so that she could scarcely see him at all.

In a few seconds the Sunbeam was quiet again, and stood gazing at her curiously.

"Why are you in bed, Nelly? Are you so sick that you can't go out and play with other children? Look!" he cried, running lightly along the window-sill. "There are millions of my brothers and sisters dancing on the grass, the flowers, the trees, and everywhere. Hear the children playing and calling one another! Why aren't you there, too?" He stopped and gazed inquiringly into her face. Nelly blushed, and whispered faintly:

"I was rather cross this afternoon, and Mamma made me go to bed."

"Oho! Did she?" said the mischievous Sunbeam, twinkling all over with delight. He gave a peculiar whistle. Down danced all the other Sunbeams from the wall, and gathered around Nelly.

"I'm so glad you're naughty, Nelly," said the Bad Little Sunbeam. "Oh, Nelly, Nelly! You're worse than I. I was never sent to bed in the middle of the day. I'll tell my father that I've found a little girl worse than I, and he'll be so shocked.

He'll follow you all summer long, and will always remember that you're a naughty girl; then he won't have time to worry about me so much. Won't he be surprised to find some one naughtier than I? He thinks I am the naughtiest child in the world," and the Sunbeam rolled on the bed in fits of laughter.

"Please, please, don't be so cruel," cried Nelly, in despair.

The awful idea of having the Sun know of her bad behavior, and the thought of his following her day after day with disapproval and horror, were too much for the poor little girl. She had heard of sunstrokes and of dreadful things happening to people. One frightful idea after another darted through her brain. She could not bear the thought of seeing the Sun go down, red and glowing, behind the hills, and of fearing that his anger might be intended for her.

The Naughty Sunbeam was quieter now, but his eyes still danced with mischief as he sat cross-legged on her pillow.

"Nelly," he said solemnly, "I'm not quite so big as your fist, yet I can make you afraid of me."

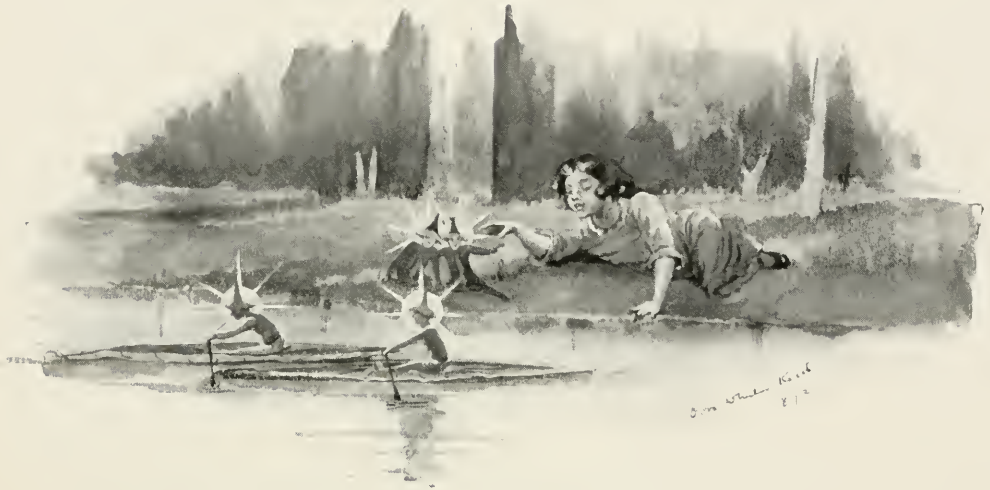
As he spoke these words, he put his golden cap jauntily on the back of his head, thrust his hands gaily into the pockets of his jacket, and strutted across the bed with such an air of comical dignity

that, angry as she was, Nelly could not help laughing.

There is nothing Sunbeams love so much as merriment. At the sound of Nelly's laugh they all brightened immediately, joined hands, and danced the prettiest dance imaginable, their voices blending in a song of mocking, enticing sweetness.

"Come with us, Nelly," they pleaded, "run through the garden, follow the path by the brook, cross the meadow by the old stone wall and be free, free and happy in the woods with us. Why should a little girl be sent to bed on a perfect summer day? Think of the fun we have! We play all day long with one another, with birds, with butterflies. We know the loveliest places in the woods where the moss is like a thick carpet, and where we can dance on the ripples of the brook. Oh, come, Nelly! Come and play with us. You will never want to be with children again."

Fascinated and excited, Nelly jumped lightly out of bed. In a moment she had slipped on her clothes, clapped her hat on her tangled curls, softly opened the door, and followed the dancing Sunbeams, with footsteps as swift and noiseless as their own, along the silent hall, down the staircase, and out into the gorgeous sunshine, the fresh, sweet, open air.



"OFF THEY STARTED, DOWN THE STREAM."

Never had the world seemed so beautiful to Nelly. Thousands of other Sunbeams joined their party as they sped along. In the woods they played games, they chased one another, they taught Nelly the funniest songs, until, breathless and tired out, she threw herself on the mossy carpet by the brook, and confessed that she could do no more.

"What a pity to be a little girl, and to grow tired so soon!" cried the Sunbeams. "No matter, Nelly; lie there and rest, while we amuse you and show what we can do."

Then, taking leaves, they floated them on the water as if they were boats. Three Sunbeams jumped into each boat, two of them armed with stout, long blades of grass for oars, the third, sitting in the stern, deftly used the stem of the leaf for a rudder.

Off they started down the stream, the delicate green shells darting along, and the dainty oarsmen pulling with all their strength, while Nelly, forgetting her fatigue, ran along the shore with the rest of the excited Sunbeams, cheering as heartily as they.

Of course, the Naughty Sunbeam won, which made him more conceited than ever. Still the conceit of a Sunbeam is so innocently gay that you can forgive him almost anything; for all his naughtiness is full of charm.

The race over, the Sunbeams gathered around

Nelly and told her delightful stories of their adventures; of how they stole through the woods every morning, wakening the birds and flowers, drinking the dew from the flower petals, and making their fairy breakfast of honey.

"The morning-glory is the flower we live upon," explained the Sunbeams. "Every morning we waken it before all other flowers, and at night, when we leave, it closes its soft petals firmly, and yields its sweetness to no entreaties but ours. We do not care for the gaudy sunflowers. They are devoted to our Father, and grow in open fields where they can turn their big, yellow faces constantly to him. If they saw us in any mischief they would be sure to frown upon us and to tell it all to the Sun; but, fortunately, we are always in the woods, in shady gardens and nooks, where we can run in and out all day long, until Father sends his Rays to look for us, toward evening."

While they prattled on Nelly listened, more and more entranced, and no one noticed the few dark clouds sailing grandly and quietly along the western sky. As these clouds neared the Sun, many of the Sunbeams, feeling chilled and depressed, glanced upward, and, knowing their father's wishes, dutifully left the merry party to hurry home. The clouds spread. Weighted with a load of thunder, they hung, dark and threat-

ening, low upon the hill. The Sun was almost overcast. Nelly and her companions looked around alarmed. The woods grew dark. The wind moaned restlessly through the trees. A distant rumble of thunder was heard, and Nelly turned anxiously to her little friends. How pale and small they appeared! All their brilliancy was gone. They had dwindled to half their original size. At last the Bad Little Sunbeam spoke, and his voice, had a faint, far-away sound.

"We must hurry home, Nelly," he said, speaking slowly and with difficulty. "There is going to be a great storm, and Father is very angry with us. You have been a bad little girl, so it will do you no harm to have a good drenching. I don't see how you will find your way back again; but I suppose some of your family will search for you, and when they find you you'll have some dreadful punishment for running away as you have done. Well, it will be a lesson for you. Good-by."

As the last words fell from his lips a sudden, brilliant Ray darted from the sun, and swept the little mischief-makers out of sight. A loud clap of thunder echoed among the mountains; every vestige of sunlight disappeared.

"O Mamma, Mamma! If I could only find my Mamma!" cried terrified Nelly.

The awful silence which followed the thunder was suddenly broken by the heavy pattering of raindrops through the trees. A moment before the woods had been smiling and full of life and happiness; little birds had hopped fearlessly to Nelly's side, amused and delighted with the Sunbeams' antics. But the birds had disappeared with the sunshine, and Nelly seemed the only living creature exposed to the fury of the storm. The wind took her hat, and it floated down the stream out of sight. She staggered to her feet to try to find the path by which she had come, but no path was there, and the vivid flashes of lightning made the darkness more intense. Her summer dress was soon soaked through, and clung to her, chilling her to the marrow of her bones. She stumbled among the trees, bruising her wet feet, and cutting her shoes on the sharp stones around her. At length she sank helpless to the ground.

"If I could only see my Papa and Mamma just one minute before I die, to tell them how sorry I am that I was so naughty," she moaned half aloud, and then stopped, frightened at the sound of her own voice among the awful voices of Nature.

How glad she would have been to have seen her cousin Kitty. If she could only live to play with Kitty once more, Kitty could have all the dolls and could do anything she liked with the

play-house. Why didn't she mind Mamma and stay warm and dry, in her own bed where Mamma had sent her as a punishment ?

She began to grow hungry. It must be long after six o'clock! Ellen must have brought her supper and found her gone. Perhaps they would come to look for her. Papa and Mamma would certainly be worried; she knew they would not go quietly to bed, leaving their child out in the storm all night. Oh, dear! She had been so naughty! Why had she followed the Sunbeams? She had thought only of her own pleasure all day long, and over and over again Mamma had taught her that if you live simply to amuse yourself you will always be disappointed and miserable.

The Sunbeams had thought of nothing else. But! Stop a moment! All Sunbeams are not thoughtless and naughty. No, they really have a great work to do in the world. Is it nothing to sparkle on the trees and flowers, giving them light and life? The full power of the Sun can never penetrate the thickest portion of the woods, but the Sunbeams dart in and out, warming and caressing the most delicate flowers, coaxing them to grow. How many beautiful blossoms would wither and droop if obliged to live in the full glare of sunlight! Yes, the pretty Sunbeams have a great work to do in the world, and as all this occurred to her,

poor Nelly felt so useless, so wet and so cold, that she burst out sobbing with all her might.

But what was that? The storm had tired itself out. The wind blew and puffed irregularly, as if it were breathless after its great exertions. Now that all was quieter, Nelly was sure she could hear heavy footsteps coming nearer and nearer, pausing every now and then, coming slowly, carefully, on and on, until she was paralyzed with terror. There was no doubt—it must be a bear.

"Oh! What shall I do! What shall I do! I don't want to be eaten up! Papa, Papa, don't let the bears eat me up! I will be good! I will be good!" and Nelly clung to Papa's neck as he stooped and lifted her in his strong, loving arms.

"My poor little daughter! My darling child! Don't be so terrified. Papa is here and no bears are anywhere about."

"Yes, I heard them," sobbed Nelly. "They will eat you up, too, Papa. Take me away; take me away!"

Very tenderly Papa carried his shivering little girl on his breast. She felt a warm shawl of Mamma's carefully wrapped around her. How thankful she was to cling to Papa, to feel his lips gently touch her cold, wet cheek, and to know that she was safe at last! What! Not a word of reproach after she had been so naughty? How

ashamed Nelly felt! In all her life she had never been so much ashamed. But Papa said nothing. He could see that his child had suffered, and had been sufficiently punished for her wilfulness.

Silently and caressingly he carried her down the steep turn in the hill, along the noisy brook which was now rushing past, swollen by the heavy rainfall, and through the thick, wet meadow grass, the very way that Nelly had come so carelessly and joyfully a few hours before.

The rain had ceased, the clouds were beginning to break, and the Sun was piercing through them when Papa placed Nelly in Mamma's arms. Mothers have quick instinct. One glance into the miserable little face was enough for Mamma. She seemed to read all the temptations, fears and disappointments of the day in Nelly's tear-dimmed eyes.

As the group stood there on the piazza, the birds suddenly broke into a joyous twittering, the Sun flashed out in all the splendor of a dying summer day. The few heavy clouds that remained lowering in the sky changed from a dull gray to deep violet, purple, and gold. Every raindrop hung, a glittering jewel, on the trees and flowers. Away in the distant heavens arched the shadow of a rainbow. The brilliancy of the setting Sun eclipsed all other coloring, yet, for an instant, the rainbow held its own, delicately distinct and pure—

then merged into the general homage to the monarch of the day.

"Darling, look!" said Mamma's tender voice. "The Sun will disappear in a second. It has turned into a large, crimson ball, and is just going down behind the hill. I have never seen the Sun of a richer, deeper color than to-night."

But Nelly understood the meaning of that fiery glow, and trembled for the mischievous Sunbeams.

"My little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me."—SHAKESPEARE.

The Punishment

The Punishment

IT was nearly daybreak, and the Rays stood patiently at the Sun's bedside, waiting for their master to rise.

On this particular morning, however, the Sun showed no intention of moving, but lay sadly thinking of his Naughty Sunbeams, and wondering if he could ever correct them and teach them to be good.

"It is almost time for you to rise, sire," said the Rays anxiously.

Was it possible that the Sun could be late? The Rays had never heard of such a thing, and they glanced at one another in alarm.

"I shall not rise this morning," said the Sun, calmly but decidedly. "Cover the heavens with clouds, and let it rain a fine, persistent rain, all day upon the earth. Take the mischievous Sunbeams and lock them in one of the clouds. Keep them closely confined until evening, and then send them to me. We shall see if such treatment may sober them a little"; and, turning over on his side, the Sun went fast asleep again.

"Father! Father! Where is Father? Why don't we start?" cried the Sunbeams, dancing up to the Rays, full of impatience to begin their day.

"The Sun has commanded rain," replied the Rays sternly. "All the Sunbeams who behaved so badly the other day are to have a good chance to reform"; and before the bewildered little fellows could realize what had happened, they were seized upon and forced into a big, dark cloud, where they were left prisoners.

"Well, if this isn't perfectly ridiculous," said the Naughty Sunbeam.

In reality he was much frightened, but it would never do to let his brothers suspect such a weakness on his part. There they were, all huddled together in a corner of the cloud, and our little friend was the first to break the oppressive silence which had lasted at least half a minute.

The others looked at him admiringly.

"You don't mean that you can think of a way for us to escape from this cloud and go down to the earth?" they cried joyfully.

"Of course not, you foolish fellows," said the Bad Little Sunbeam, made happy and self-confident once more by this touching belief in his powers. "Still, I see no reason why we should sit here and be miserable. Let us examine this cloud, and see what we can find to entertain us."

The Sunbeams brightened instantly. Much delighted, they began to burrow in the fleecy depths around them, to joke and laugh together,

and to pelt one another with cloud-balls, made from the soft cloud-flakes, for all the world as human children play with snowballs.

What gay little Sunbeams they were! If the cloud had not been unusually thick, some of the Sun's Rays might have heard their tinkling laughter, as they rolled over and over, tripped up any unsuspecting Sunbeam who was off his guard a second, and then half smothered him with cloud-balls until he cried for mercy.

On the earth it was a dismal morning; one of those chilly, rainy days, that sometimes creep into the heart of summer on purpose to make us ashamed of our grumbling remarks about the heat, and to make us apologetically grateful when soft breezes scatter the clouds once more, and Summer, fresh and brilliant, resumes her sway.

This particular morning the people on earth were disappointed a hundred times. Little girls and boys, who valued every moment of their vacation in the country, ran to the windows, and cried excitedly, "Papa, Mamma, come quickly! Look at the light that breaks through that black cloud every now and then. Oh, it's going to clear! It will be a beautiful day, after all! Hurrah! We can go out and play in a few minutes!" But the sky soon darkened, and not for an instant did the rain cease falling.

"Ugh!" cried the Sunbeams, who had made a few holes in the cloud and peeped through to see how things looked down below. "What a blessing it is not to be on the earth to-day. Everything is as gloomy and wet as possible."

"Silly children," said the Bad Little Sunbeam —who was, nevertheless, quite a Wise Little Sunbeam—"you know perfectly well that if we had all been good the Sun would have sent us down on the earth as usual; it could not have rained, and we should have enjoyed ourselves just as much as ever."

This provoked the other Sunbeams.

"The idea of your putting on airs!" they exclaimed mockingly. "You are the fellow who always leads us into scrapes. Whose fault is it that we are locked up here to-day? You are a—"

"Well, well," interrupted the Sunbeam hastily, "let us cover up these holes in the cloud and try to think of some better amusement than that of looking down on the wet, cold earth."

"Hello! Hello!" sounded a sweet, gay voice.

"What is that?" cried the Sunbeams.

"Who am I? Who am I? Try to find me"; and then followed a peal of tantalizing laughter. Up jumped the Sunbeams wild with curiosity.

It is as difficult to run about in a cloud as it is in a snowdrift, and the little fellows tumbled one

over another, bumping their heads together in their eagerness to discover their mysterious visitor. They were certainly a funny sight, and caused intense amusement to the owner of the musical voice, whose laughter now seemed to come from every corner of the cloud at once.

Suddenly the Naughty Sunbeam spied a pair of bright eyes twinkling through one of the holes in the cloud. Instantly all the Sunbeams flashed in that direction, tore a larger place in the cloud, and dragged in the saucy Breeze who had fooled them so successfully.

"Please, please, don't pull me around so roughly," panted the Breeze good-humoredly.

Slender, airy, delicate, she slipped away from the Sunbeams, and stood, daintily poised on one tiny foot, her long brown hair and graceful draperies fluttering gently, as though unaccustomed to a moment's quiet.

"Oh! poor little Sunbeams!" she cried, giving a quick glance around the cloud. "How can you stay patiently in this gloomy place? Weather makes no difference to me, and I know that on stormy days you cannot sparkle on the earth; but I had no idea that you are obliged to be shut up like this when it rains. How can you endure such a life? This morning," and she gave a proud toss to her head, "the East Wind made me a present of

a silver horn, and now I can blow nearly a blast. People never pay any attention to me when the Winds are blowing, yet they are glad enough to have me on sultry days. Then they turn their faces toward me and say smilingly, 'What a delicious little Breeze!' Do they think a Breeze has no feelings?" she exclaimed disdainfully. "Stupid mortals! The East Wind says that I may use this horn only in bad weather. I shall manage to be heard then, however, because I will go straight up to each person I meet and tickle his nose, and blow into his eyes and ears. Good-by; I only looked in for a moment to see why you were making so much noise, as I was flying along. I'm in a hurry to have some fun by blowing as much of a blast as I can," and the Breeze turned away to continue her journey.

"Take me with you," whispered the Bad Little Sunbeam excitedly.

The others stood aghast. "Don't attempt any such dangerous, terrible thing," they cried in alarm. "What would the Sun say if he knew that such an idea could enter your head? How can you dream of going down upon the earth on a rainy day? Such a thing is unheard of. Do give it up! Don't leave us here alone!" But the Breeze was greatly interested.

"Of course I can take you," she said gaily. "Just nestle upon my shoulder, and wrap yourself

in my silken scarf; you are accustomed to sunshine and you might feel the chilliness of the day; but if you are careful you will have a glorious ride, and it will be nothing for me to bring you quickly back and put you safely into this cloud."

"We'll have the best fun in the world," laughed the Naughty Sunbeam, dancing with glee.

Deaf to the entreaties of his brothers, the venturesome little fellow steadied himself by two long strands of the Breeze's floating hair, as, spurning the cloud with her foot, she hovered in the air, a vision of dainty mischief, the Sunbeam's sparkling face peeping over her shoulder—and the pretty picture was gone, leaving the other Sunbeams completely disconcerted.

The Breeze tossed back her wavy hair, and laughed aloud for joy. The raindrops glistened on her soft gray mantle, and she darted along like a swallow. It was all beautiful to her; and, besides, she was to use her silver horn for the first time. She would let the Winds see that she could blow; so she puckered her red lips, puffed her pretty cheeks, and out came the sweet, plaintive note that we often hear in stormy weather, if we stop among the trees for a moment and listen, before it is drowned by the powerful tones of the Winds.

The Breeze was in ecstacies; not so our Naughty Sunbeam. It was strange and lonely to

be the only Sunbeam and to see his familiar sky covered by thick clouds. The drip, drip, drip of the rain upon the earth made a dreary accompaniment for his thoughts. The Breeze never dreamed of consulting his wishes as to what way they should go, and the Sunbeam, whose word was law with his band of followers, meekly tried to keep his balance, and never offered a suggestion.

"I think I've thoroughly learned how to blow this horn," said the Breeze with great satisfaction, after practicing in the woods and fields until the Sunbeam felt that he would have a fit if he had to hear another note. "I must find some human being to experiment upon," she continued, resting a moment upon the swaying limb of a tree.

"I've had such a delightful ride that I fear we have been out long enough, and it must be time to return to the cloud," said the Sunbeam hypocritically. It would not do to offend the Breeze, as she might drop him where he was, and he could never find his way home without sunshine.

"Goodness, no!" answered the Breeze cheerfully; "we haven't had half fun enough yet." *Fun! !* The Sunbeam's heart sank to his boots. "No, no, there is plenty of time. I'm going down the main road of this village, where we will be sure to meet somebody," and off flew the Breeze again.

The first person they met was a boy carrying a basket. The Breeze blew his umbrella out of his hand; she was not strong enough to turn it inside out, but as it blew along the road and into the mud-puddles, she was satisfied. Then, tickling his nose, and twirling away his hat, she bubbled over with laughter!

"Wasn't that glorious?" she asked when they had left the bewildered boy far behind them on the roadside, gathering his scattered belongings.

"Perfect nonsense," thought the Sunbeam; but he did not dare to say it aloud. By this time he was heartily tired of the whole thing. He had never been alone in his life, and he missed his bright little brothers inexpressibly. The Breeze had no thought for his comfort at all. She seemed to think it impossible that he should not be amused by everything that diverted her, and the Sunbeam was not accustomed to being treated in this fashion. You know not one of us likes to be ordered around when we have been in the habit of doing it to others, and the Sunbeam felt just as you or I might have felt in his place. For one thing, he found the Breeze unbearably conceited.

"Just see how I can distract all these people," she said proudly. First she blew a newspaper out of the hand of an old man who was trying to read on a sheltered corner of his piazza; then she teased

some school children whom she met running along the muddy road. One baby-girl had a rosy-cheeked apple in her hand, and, just when she was about to take a large, juicy bite, the Breeze tooted in the child's ear so suddenly that the apple rolled to the ground and was lost in a big puddle. The little girl dug her chubby fists into her eyes and began to cry. "Come along, cry-baby," called the larger children. "It is nothing but a breeze that blew the rain into your face and made you drop the apple," and off they went, shouting, "Tom, Tom, the piper's son," at the top of their lungs. The baby, floundering in the puddles and sobbing helplessly, toddled along after them.

Thus the Naughty Breeze played one prank after another, until, finally, the Sunbeam heard with a thrill of the greatest thankfulness the words, "Now, I must take you home."

Poor little Sunbeam! He could have wept for joy as they drew near the dark clouds that screened his heaven from him. But a new trouble arose. Which was his cloud? The Breeze fluttered in the air, puzzled for a moment. The clouds all appeared exactly alike. The Sunbeam was terrified. He looked in despair at the soft masses before him. Ah! there was a rift through which the eager face of one of his little brothers shone, patiently watchful. Darting forward, the Breeze, with a quick,

graceful movement, deposited her weary passenger in the middle of the anxious group that was so delighted to receive him.

"Good-by; I'll come again, and we can have even gayer fun than to-day," she cried joyously, and the sweet, wild notes of her horn could be heard long after she was out of sight.

"No, you won't," muttered the Sunbeam doggedly. He was satisfied at last.

"Do tell us what you did and what you saw!" cried the Sunbeams, clustering around him in great excitement.

The Bad Little Sunbeam reflected a moment; then he remembered that the Breeze had had everything her own way and that he had done nothing.

"Well," he said, "it has given me a greater knowledge of life than I ever had before," and this was all the information that his brothers could drag from him.

"How do you suppose it would feel to be very, very good?" asked the Bad Little Sunbeam doubtfully.

"We might try it, suggested the others timidly. It was so unusual for the Bad Little Sunbeam to ask any advice that his companions were completely at loss for a suitable answer. This reply, however, seemed to satisfy him.

"We will," he said positively; and the matter was settled.

At that moment the cloud opened, and one of the Rays entered.

"Sunbeams! Where have you gone?" she cried anxiously, and then started back in amazement. Was it possible? There stood the Sunbeams; not one was missing; but what miracle had happened? They were as bright, as beaming as ever, but their sauciness ——!

"What — what — what can be the matter?" stammered the Ray, really frightened by the change.

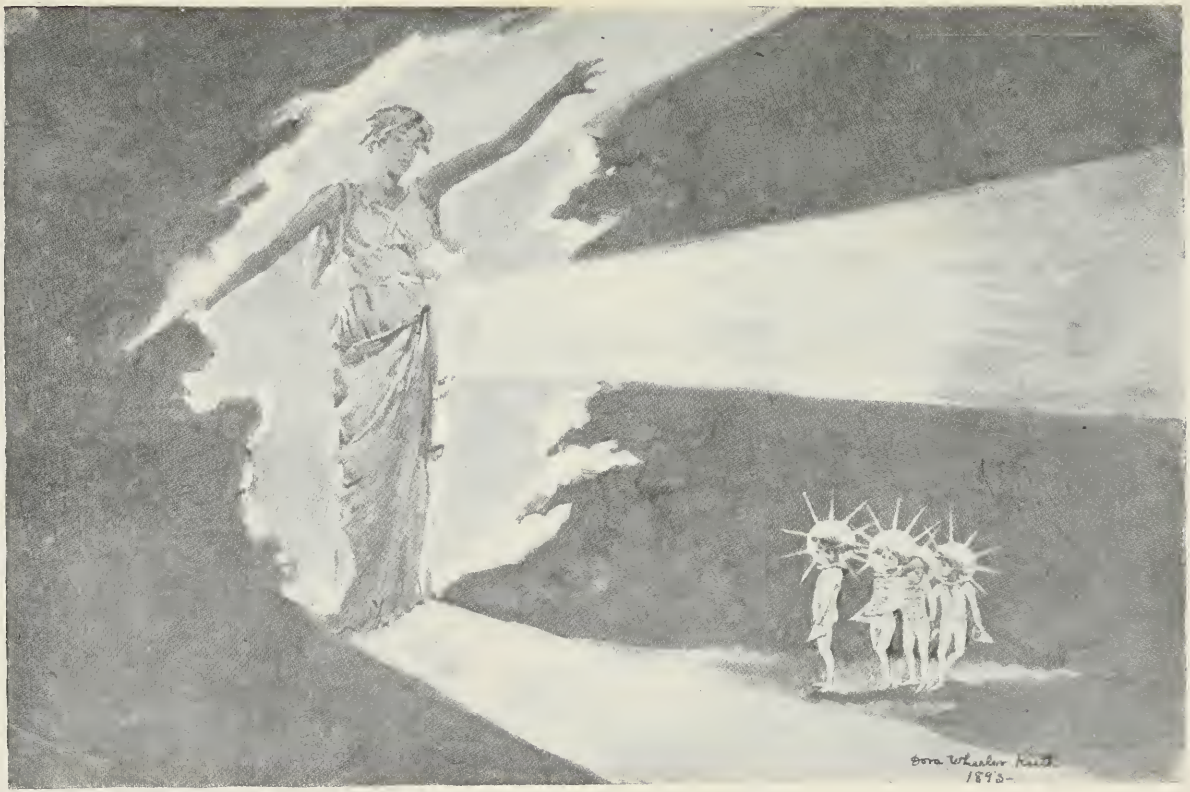
Her astonishment and alarm were too much for the Sunbeams' gravity. They laughed, and laughed, and laughed, until the cloud nearly gave way under them.

"Oh! oh! oh!" gasped the Naughty Sunbeam. "I had no idea we could have such fun by trying to be good. We have never enjoyed anything so much in our lives."

This burst of tinkling melody reassured the Ray.

"Ah, that is all, is it," she said, greatly relieved.

The poor Ray had seriously feared that the punishment of confining such active little fellows all day long in a dark cloud had affected their



"AT THAT MOMENT THE CLOUD OPENED AND ONE OF THE RAYS ENTERED."

health and, probably, impaired their reason. The gay, familiar music of their laughter had never sounded sweeter, and, with her anxiety banished, she led them before the Sun.

"Father," said the sprites, kneeling with infinite grace, and uncovering their bright heads, "Father, we are sorry."

"My Sunbeams," answered the Sun tenderly. "I am grieved when I see you thoughtless and neglectful of the duties that our great Mother Nature provides for us all. How can you atone for your mischievous unkindness to poor little Nelly? That child has suffered from a heavy cold ever since your escapade in the woods." The Sun paused, and looked silently at the culprits before him.

Everywhere was warmth and beauty. The sky, clear and radiant, was exquisite in its vivid yet tender coloring. The good little Sunbeams and the Rays stood in their brightest attire; while in the midst of it all shone the Sun, superb in his glowing majesty. The Sunbeams were remorseful. Poor Nelly! What a contrast her surroundings must be to theirs!

"Father," said the Bad Little Sunbeam, and his voice had caught something of a wistful earnestness that was both new and sweet, "let us try to repair the wrong we have done. Send us down to the earth for a few minutes, simply long enough to

find Nelly and to tell her we are sorry; perhaps that may help her to grow strong and well again."

"Go, my children," answered the Sun gently; "do what good you can."

Through the air flashed the Sunbeams. The flowers lifted their dainty heads, smiling a glad welcome as they received a passing caress.

"Oh! Sunbeams, we have missed you for so many, many hours," twittered the delighted little birds.

"Sunbeams! Sunbeams! Come and play! Come and play!" called thousands of happy voices from the woods; but the Sunbeams never faltered, never swerved from their road to Nelly.

In Nelly's room burned a bright wood-fire, and close to the fire sat a pale little girl. You could not have recognized Nelly. All day long Mamma had told her stories, read to her, and played games with her. Nelly was beginning to feel more like herself, but for three or four days her throat had been sore and aching, so that she could hardly speak. Mamma had left the room for a few moments, and Nelly sat there, feeling sad and lonely, but trying to be patient. Leaning her cheek on her hand, the child let her story-book slip to the floor, and gave a quick, weary sigh. Suddenly she felt a warm touch upon her face, and the room brightened.

"Oh! Nelly, Nelly!" cried the Sunbeams, sparkling all over her curly hair, her pale face, her slippered feet, her listless fingers. The delicious warmth of their presence seemed to bring air and fragrance into the room. They were a hundred times more bewitching in their pretty repentance than they had ever been before.

"Poor Nelly!" they whispered tenderly. "Do forgive us, little Nelly. We have learned how naughty we were, and if you will play with us again when you are well, we will try to make you happy, and to show you how good we can be. We will come to your window every day, and bring you sweet morning air fresh from the hilltops; we will kiss the color into your face again; and in a day or two you will feel so well that we shall be able to run in the woods together."

"I have learned how naughty I was, too," said Nelly frankly. "Don't feel unhappy. Mamma says that even if you did tempt me to run away and play with you, I need not have followed so easily. You see, if I had not wanted to go, I could have simply said I would not; and deep down in my heart I had a feeling that I was doing wrong all the time. But Mamma understands," said the child, letting her tired head drop back on the pillow. "I have such a good Mamma. She knows exactly how I feel, and the reason why I'm naughty, and explains it to

me. She helps me to be good just as hard as she can. Oh, she is the wonderfullest Mamma!" and the little girl smiled contentedly as she watched the Sunbeams. This time, however, the naughty sprites had determined to be good.

"We must go, little Nelly," they said; and nestling against her throat, covering her bright hair and surprised face with dainty good-by kisses, they were gone with the rapidity that nothing but a flash of light can employ.

"Do you know," said the Naughty Sunbeam thoughtfully, when they were preparing for bed a moment later, "being good did not tire me half so much as I thought it would. But the funniest thing was the sight of that Ray's face when she opened the cloud to let us out, and found us all so serious"; and the Sunbeams laughed themselves to sleep.

"A little rule, a litte sway,
A sunbeam in a winter's day."—DYER.

One Good Turn

One Good Turn

FOR two days it had been snowing heavily. New York lay like an enchanted city, with its spires and long rows of houses, its avenues, parks, and narrow side-streets, the dwellings of rich and poor draped alike by impartial Nature in robes of whitest velvet.

If you had risen early that morning, wrapped yourself in a thick coat, had your room thoroughly heated, and had looked out upon the yet undefiled streets, the deep blue of the heavens, the brilliancy of the sunshine, you would have never dreamed that the thermometer had fallen below zero, and that it was, in fact, the coldest day known in New York for fifteen years.

Little Tom Riley had no thick coat and no warm fire to make him incredulous of the cold without; neither had he a thermometer to tell him how many degrees the mercury had fallen during the night. His purple fingers and icy toes were thermometer enough for him. Poor Mrs. Riley turned uneasily on her bed in the most sheltered corner of the cheerless attic room. The wash-tubs stood empty. The ironing-board, with its old blanket folded neatly around it, was bare. The

day before the storm Tom had carried home the last basket of clean clothes, and had been obliged to tell his mother's few customers that she was too ill to take any more washing for the present. Tom was a hard student at the public school. Although small for his age—he was "mos' twelve," he said—he stood well in his classes, and far surpassed other boys older and larger than he. Mother and son had but each other in the world. Mrs. Riley stood at the wash-tub all day, while Tom studied earnestly at school, and they both looked forward to the time when Tom might obtain the business opening that his kind teacher had promised to secure for him after another year's study.

"Tommy darlin'," said his mother's weak, patient voice.

Tom crossed the room and stood before her.

"You're gettin' behind in your classes, Tom, and now it's the third day since I wasn't able to do my work, and you've had to stay to look after me, and you've had to do odd jobs around for to help me. Come an' kiss me, dearie, I'm afraid you've got to give up your schoolin', me darlin' boy."

A lump rose in Tommy's throat, but he winked his eyes, gave a big swallow, and it was gone.

"I've got no time to lose, Mother," he said quietly, though his little heart was swelling. "I oughter go to work jest as quick as I can, and we'll

let the schoolin' go; there's lots of things I could try to do."

Somehow it was pleasant to begin the day by going to work for mother, and Tom put his school-life behind him, feeling a business man already. Off he started cheerily down the street. The Sunbeams had not been able to find their way through the grimy attic window, and Tom had not imagined that the day was so clear and brilliant. But, my! wasn't it cold! He pulled his worn cap over his ears and trudged along, bending his head before the wind. No matter how briskly you may walk, however, a ragged jacket, and an empty stomach cannot battle against the cold. Just as Tom was beginning to feel faint and discouraged, he saw a shop before him with the sign, "Boy Wanted," in the window.

"That's it," he said hopefully, and in he walked.

A man, perched upon a high stool behind a desk at the end of the shop, was reading a newspaper. Tom's eyes came just above the rim of the desk; he removed his cap from his head, and waited patiently for the man to notice him. The sense of cold and hunger, which had disappeared for a moment, returned with two-fold force. It certainly is not encouraging to stare at the unsympathetic back of a newspaper, and to know that it conceals

the face of a strange man who may start you in life and may not. Tom felt in his pockets, and their emptiness reminded him that there was no time to be lost, for Mother must have food that day.

"I don't suppose a man would put up a sign, 'Boy Wanted,' if he didn't mean it," Tom reasoned, by way of plucking up his courage. "Hem! hem! say, mister, do you want a boy?"

The shot was fired; down went the newspaper, and Tom presented a bold front to the enemy; that is to say, his honest brown eyes, which were all that could be seen of him, stared the enemy bravely and unblinkingly full in the face.

"Well, upon my word, you're a boy, are you?" asked the man, peering over his desk with an amused, though not unkindly, smile.

That cut Tom to the quick.

"Have you got a boy?" he inquired with gentle dignity.

"Let me see; do you know your way about the city?" asked the man, impressed by the little fellow's intelligent face.

"I know parts of it pretty well," answered Tom truthfully.

"Oh! you'll have to know the city thoroughly before you can hope to be an errand boy—at any-rate, you're too little," and the man settled down to

his newspaper as if nothing had happened to interrupt him.

"I'm mos' twelve," said Tom, a break in his voice. "Good-day, sir," and he walked out of the shop.

How intensely cold it was, and how the snow glittered in the sunlight! Only the middle of the road and the middle of the sidewalk showed stains of travel; the great white walls blockading the streets, still kept their beauty spotless. Men and boys, whistling and joking, were shoveling the snow from the entrances of shops and houses.

Perhaps he could earn a few cents in that way, thought Tom. But, no, a boy and a shovel were at work before every building that was not already cleared, and the day was advancing. Tom left Sixth Avenue, turned up a side street, rang the bell of a house the steps of which were yet untouched, and said, in his most business-like manner, "I'll shovel your snow off for twenty-five cents, regular price."

The maid burst out laughing. "Why, there's a boy working in the back-yard now. He'll be in front in a minute. You're nothin' but a baby! A little bit of a fellow like you can't use a heavy shovel, it would break your back."

"I'm mos' twelve," said Tom, great, unshed tears standing in his eyes, and off he trotted again, warming himself by swinging his arms and slapping

his chest, as he had seen coachmen do, trying to look as if he didn't care. But he did care. As soon as the maid had shut the door, Tom sat on a hydrant and meditated. There was no use in walking. Walking neither warmed him nor took away his hunger. Besides, he had come a long distance, and numb as they were, his feet and legs ached unbearably.

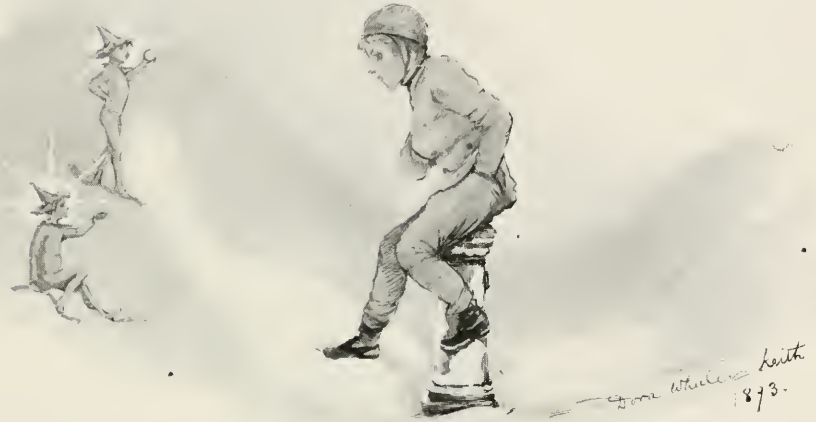
"What a dreadful, dreadful thing it is to be little!" he sighed to himself.

"Not at all," answered a tiny voice with some asperity.

Tom nearly tumbled off the hydrant in his surprise. There, on a snowdrift close beside him, were our little friends the Sunbeams, but no other living creature, and Tom having had no acquaintance with Sunbeams, and not knowing they were in the habit of talking, thought that he must have been mistaken. He was dreadfully discouraged, and sat down again on the hydrant with big tears gathering in his eyes.

But if Tom had ceased to think about the Sunbeams, he was not forgotten by them.

"I wonder who he is," said the Naughty Sunbeam to his brothers, "and I wonder why he looks so sad. If it were stormy weather I could understand, but how *can* anyone be sorrowful when the Sun shines?"



"TOM NEARLY TUMBLED OFF THE HYDRANT IN SURPRISE."

The Naughty Sunbeam was of an inquiring turn of mind, and somehow Tom had greatly excited his curiosity. "Why," he asked, in his tinkling little voice, "Why does such a big fellow as that call himself little, and why does he cry about it? I'm little myself, and I'm very glad to be little. Beside me that boy is very, *very* big. Nothing would induce me to be so big as he is."

So the Sunbeams began to play inquisitively about Tom's face, and presently they heard him talking to himself. "I'm a great deal too little for a boy," he said. "I've tried and tried to get work," and I always get the same answer, "You're too little." I'm awful cold and hungry; I feel as if I'd never get home to Mother, and perhaps she is lyin' there colder and hungrier than me. I wish I could grow some; I don't see why I should be so little when I'm mos' twelve. Oh, why can't I find somebody to let me sweep the snow off, even if I am little."

The sadness of the hungry little fellow's voice filled the Sunbeams with pity. They were silent for a moment, and then the Naughty Sunbeam jumped up with a glance of delight. Hardly a minute ago he had seen a pretty little girl playing on a snow bank in front of a house near by, and while he had been frolicing among her shining hair, he had heard her mother say that she would

give anything to have some boy sweep the snow from her door-steps. How to get Tom to that place was the question. So, just as a big tear was falling from Tom's eyes, the Sunbeam dashed against it, and made such a sparkle that Tom quickly looked up, and a few capers, such as Sunbeams know how to cut, caused him to look all around to see what was going on. As he did so, the Naughty Sunbeam made a swift dash in the right direction, and, hardly fifty yards away Tom saw the lady still standing on the door-step. The Naughty Sunbeam dashed into her eyes, too, and then from hers to Tom's, and all in a twinkling she began to beckon to Tom, and Tom began to run to the lady. When Tom had reached her, he took off his cap politely and asked her to give him the job.

"You must be a strong little fellow," said the lady smilingly, "if you can handle that heavy iron shovel. Why, it's almost as big as yourself."

"Yes'm," he answered, "but you'll see what I can do with it. Shall I clear out the area, too?" Now that he had found a chance to work for Mother, he felt himself as strong as a giant.

"Certainly, and that will be thirty-five cents," said the lady kindly. "I always pay a man thirty-five cents for shoveling the snow from the area after he has cleared the steps.

Tom worked like a bee. The Sunbeams, laughing at his energy, danced merrily around him, rejoicing in their good deed.

"This is a great deal better fun than teasing children," whispered the Naughty Sunbeam to his brothers, so that Tom might not overhear. "Let us hurry along while this boy is busy, I have a delightful plan, which we must lose no time in carrying out," and away glided the Sunbeams so silently and quickly over the snow-drifts that Tom did not miss them until they were well out of sight.

Shovelful after shovelful of snow he tossed from the area. The front steps were thoroughly cleaned, and his work was nearly over; but, instead of the effort growing less as the quantity of snow diminished, it became more and more difficult for him to lift the heavy shovel. A sudden dizziness made him stagger; shadows passed before his eyes; stopping his work for a moment, he leaned against the railing to take breath. A child, a baby girl, pushed aside the window curtain and looked out. In one chubby hand she held a large slice of buttered bread from which she took an occasional absent-minded bite, all the while keeping her thoughtful eyes fixed on Tom. A madness of hunger came over the starving boy. He felt a wild desire to break the window with his shovel, to seize

the bread held so carelessly by the child's tiny fingers, to stuff it, cram it, with both his little claws into his famished mouth.

"Well, you good-for-nothing, lazy fellow! Are you never going to finish this place? A nice boy you are to do a job!"

A sharp-featured maid-servant, her face tied up in flannel, opened the door long enough to make this remark to Tom, and then closed it with an ill-tempered jerk.

"I guess she must have an awful bad toothache to be so cross," thought Tom, picking up his shovel. All the blood in his half-frozen body rushed to his face. "I'm mighty glad folks can't tell what you're thinking about. I clean forgot my work, and Mother, and the cold and everythin', jest at the sight of a piece of bread. In a few minutes I'll have money, and I can go and buy everythin' I want." This idea brought back his failing courage. But how curious! Why should he feel so weak? The child bent desperately over his shovel, and put forth all his strength. "Mother'll be waitin' and wonderin' why I don't come," he panted to himself. "Now let's see; thirty-five cents'll buy bread, meat, and a whole quart of milk. I'll have money left over to take home; and then, perhaps, I can get some place to-morrow to do regular errands or somethin'."

One last exhausted push with his shovel and Tom had finished. His thirty-five cents were fairly earned. He rang the door-bell, and the sharp-featured servant put the money into his trembling hand. The boy's eager eyes and pinched, unchildlike face told of want and suffering.

"There now, you've done the work beautiful," said the woman, touched in spite of herself; "it's a perfect shame for your Mother to allow a baby like you to be out on a bitter day like this. Run along home as quick as you can. You're too little to do such heavy work."

"I'm mos' twelve," said Tom indignantly, then—"Thank you, marm," he added, squeezing his thirty-five cents, and trotted down the street with great dignity.

But the deliciously tempting rows of bread and cake in the window of a bakery near by drove all other ideas out of Tom's head.

The thought of his sick Mother, and the consciousness that he was well able to buy what she needed, gave him an heroic manliness very different from the wild impulse he had had to snatch the slice of bread from the little girl's hand. The intoxicating perfume of the bake-shop made his head swim and his mouth water, but he had no desire to break off a corner of the loaf he bought; it would

have choked him to eat while Mother was waiting. Hurrying to the butcher's, he got a few cents' worth of meat. The father of one of his school-mates kept a dairy close by, and there Tom borrowed a pitcher in which to carry home his quart of milk. No millionaire ever enjoyed a fortune more than this child did his thirty-five cents. It was as much as his half-frozen fingers could do to grasp the handle of the milk-pitcher, and to keep his two precious bundles securely pressed against his ragged coat. Proud and happy, he turned from busy Sixth Avenue, and started on his long homeward walk towards the river.

Whew! what an icy wind cut his face as he turned the corner! Tom staggered. The blast took away his breath for a moment, but the plucky little fellow drew his cap over his eyes, and struggled blindly on. Was he not carrying food to Mother? How the sunken eyes would brighten, and the pale cheek flush with pride when he could show his purchases and give her the first money he had ever earned! He would not spoil her pleasure by speaking of his disappointments or of his hunger; as for his being too little to be employed in a shop—surely some kind-hearted man would take him on trial if he explained that he was "mos' twelve," and could learn easily. Oh, dear! how hard it was to walk! What could be the matter

with his legs? There was no feeling in them at all! Well, it was a great deal more comfortable than to have them aching, though it certainly is queer to feel as if your legs belonged to someone else, and you had borrowed them for the day. It gave Tom a sense of responsibility about them. He felt that he might lose his foot or his right leg, for instance, and never miss it until it were left far behind on the road.

"Ah!" A stumble, then a groan, and Tom lay where he had fallen. A thin stream of milk trickled slowly down the gutter, the broken pitcher lay a few feet from him, but the handle was grasped by his stiffened fingers.

"Mother! There was a world of misery in that childish cry. Nobody heard it. Nobody was passing along the street. Nobody was looking from the windows.

All this time the sparkling Sunbeams had been dancing across the snow-drifts, watching Tom, but not quite understanding what was going on. As he fell, they clustered around him. For a moment his eyes opened, and although a delicious drowsiness was stealing over his wearied body, he was pleased with the brightness of the Sunbeams.

"Mother likes sunshine," he murmured. "I wonder when I'll get home to Mother." His eyelids drooped again. A smile rested on his lips, a

smile so sweet that the restless Sunbeams stood for a moment very still. Then Tom put out his hand as if to touch them lovingly and—feel asleep.

After a while a crowd gathered, and the people said that Tom had frozen to death in the snow. The Sunbeams did not understand what dying meant.

The Naughty Sunbeam, who was no longer quite so naughty as he had been, whispered to his brothers, "What can have happened to Tom? Why should he fall asleep in that strange way, and why do all the people look so sorry? Tom isn't sorry. Look at him. I don't seem to understand what it all means, but I know I feel a great deal happier than I should have felt, if we hadn't tried to help Tom this morning. Suppose we go on trying to help little boys and girls, instead of playing pranks and mischief."

"Oh, yes, yes," cried the Sunbeams. They are a light-hearted folk, and take a sunny view of things in general; but from that day onward they did many bright and kind and good things, and their leader was the pretty creature which had once been known as the Naughty Sunbeam.

"But the sunshine aye shall light the sky,
As round and round we run."—MACKAY.

Another

Another.

"SHE'S going to get well, Miss Williams," said the doctor, gruffly, a tone his voice invariably took when he didn't want anyone to know how moved he felt. "I tell you, this picked chicken of ours is going to get well, and her back will be as strong and straight as anybody's."

The child in the hospital crib turned her big eyes from the doctor's face to the nurses', which beamed in sympathy, and then her gaze traveled solemnly back to the doctor, her first friend, while her little, claw-like fingers curled themselves tightly about his hand in a way that made the doctor's voice gruffer than ever.

"Understand me now, Miss Williams, from to-day on, the responsibility of the case slips from my shoulders to yours. Good food, sunshine and fresh air are all I prescribe——and, see here, while you're about it, try to make the child smile a little, won't you? Doesn't anyone know her fol-de-rol language? Attention, Bettina! Maccaroni, maccaroni!"

The pale lips parted instantly, not only in a smile, but Bettina actually gave a weak little laugh and answered: "Maccaroni, si, si; dottor mac-

caroni," so promptly, so eagerly, that the nurses around her, and even the doctor himself laughed, too.

"Don't you dare let that joke get beyond this ward, young woman," said the doctor, scowling at Bettina in his fiercest manner, which didn't frighten her in the least. "The house staff would like nothing better than to fasten the name to me for life. But the maccaroni will come, I promise you," and the doctor hurried away.

All day, however, he went about his duties with the soft spot he had in his heart for his little waif troubling him considerably. When the day's work was over and he sat with his wife at dinner he absently ate what was placed before him until he noticed that he was about to take a second generous helping of maccaroni; then he said, abrubtly:

"By-the-by, dear, do you remember a little girl I picked up in a tenement house on Rose Street some time ago? She'd had a fall that had about finished her, I feared. Her back was injured like —well, she has pulled through splendidly, and she'll be able to leave the hospital a sound child by Easter, if not before. But where she is to go is the question. It's the best case I've had this long while; an absolute recovery."

"Was it a fall like little Alice's?" asked the

doctor's wife in a low tone, her head bent to arrange the flowers at her breast.

"Yes, dear, a fall like little Alice's."

The doctor could say no more just then. Little Alice had died fully twenty years before, and, although the doctor and his wife had many child friends who ran in and out of the house exactly as it pleased them, it was not the same as if little Alice were alive, and it was no use to pretend that it was.

For several days nothing further was said in the doctor's house about Bettina, but the doctor saw her regularly at the hospital, and joked with her and tried to teach her English, while kind Miss Williams nursed and petted her until Bettina grew to love Miss Williams next best to "Dottor Maccaroni."

That there could be a more delightful place on earth than the hospital, Bettina never questioned. By "Dottor Maccaroni's" orders she was moved from the crowded ward into the prettiest little room imaginable, where she lay in her crib, growing happy and strong, and eating all the maccaroni she could swallow. All sorts of good things found their way to that little room. They were certainly meant for Bettina, because she was given mysterious packages to open, and everything that came from them was plainly addressed with her name.

She had dainties and toys, and a wonderful pink wrapper that happened to fit her exactly, which seemed perfectly natural in a place where nothing ever went wrong.

But the chief delight of that wonderful room was discovered during the morning hours, when Miss Williams was taking her well-earned rest and Bettina had expected to be very lonely. One morning that she was left to herself she fell to watching the Sunbeams. Outside the window, opposite her crib, an old tree was beginning to put forth buds on the tips of its brown, twisted branches, and the Sunbeams were darting busily about as if the life of each bud depended on their exertions—as very likely it did. But the Sunbeams did not confine their attentions to the old tree. Bettina noticed that after a while they began to dance on her window-sill, then on the floor, then on the little white screen by her crib, and finally, growing bolder, they filled the room. As she lay contentedly watching their antics, she thought that she heard tinkling sounds like music far away. The Sunbeams were talking together.

Bettina was a bright little girl, and she was quickly learning English. She had a few new words to speak to "Dottor Maccaroni." every time he came, and Miss Williams had taught her to call many things by their English names; but it was

one matter to understand the doctor and Miss Williams, and another matter to understand the Sunbeams. Besides, these were American Sunbeams, you know, and, I am ashamed to say, that while they had had plenty of opportunities, they had never troubled *their* heads to learn Italian. They were sorry enough for it now.

"What do you suppose is the matter with this little girl"? the most inquisitive of the Sunbeams asked his brothers. "Let us stay to amuse her till the doctor comes. We'll hear what he says, and we'll see if we can't help her to get well. Isn't it a pity we don't know how to talk to her!" and the Sunbeam hung his head, as sorry as he could be; for he was the same little Sunbeam we have known before, only we must call him the Once Naughty Sunbeam, as now he was really and truly trying to be good.

So the Sunbeams stayed and played pranks with one another, in full view of Bettina, climbing to the top of the little white screen and sliding to the bottom, as children slide down hill, or dancing at the foot of the crib and tumbling over and over in the queerest game of leap frog that ever was played. Bettina was so completely fascinated that she didn't hear her beloved doctor and Miss Williams enter the room.

"Isn't there too much sunlight directly in

the child's eyes, doctor?" asked Miss Williams anxiously. "I intended that she should have a nap while I was away, but she can't have slept with the Sunbeams dancing around her like that."

"Too much sunshine? Nonsense!" said the doctor, rubbing his hands together in high glee at the sight of Bettina's face. "Isn't sunshine a part of my prescription, I'd like to ask? She's to sleep at the proper time for sleep, but if you shut out the Sunbeams, you're not the excellent nurse I take you for. They'll bring roses to her cheeks that no drug can give her. With my patients, and particularly my child patients, I depend upon the good offices of the Sunbeams."

"Sunbeams," repeated Bettina, catching up the new word and nodding gaily in the direction of her visitors, "Prettee, prettee Sunbeams!"

Miss Williams stooped and kissed her.

"You're a good child," she said fondly; "a dear, patient little girl, and I don't know what we'll do when the time comes for you to leave us."

But Bettina did not understand this long sentence in English. The kiss satisfied her. She was to live in the beautiful hospital for ever, she must have thought—if she gave the subject any thought at all—and with the touching confidence

of childhood she nestled against the doctor's arm, and closed her happy eyes. A nap was exactly what she needed after so exciting a morning.

In his sitting-room that evening the doctor hemmed and hawed over the newspaper, and then he put it down and crossed to where his wife sat with her book. He laid his hand upon the page she was reading.

"Mary," he said, "I want a talk with you, dear. It's about my little Italian girl again. I told you that she was on the high road to recovery, but the way a child picks up when once it begins to mend is something miraculous. If she recovers at this rate, she'll have to be discharged as cured before I can possibly find a place to send her. Now the hitch is this—"

The doctor stopped, cleared his throat, and went on, hurriedly; "I *ought*, I suppose, to put her into some institution, but those nurses at the hospital are a sentimental lot; I told them to move the child into little Alice's Memorial Room, and somehow or another they've allowed her to believe she is to live there. You—you never saw anyone half so happy in your life. She takes to petting as a duck to water; though, so far as I can learn, she's had none too much of it before. Her father and mother were respectable Italians. They are both dead, and no one claims her. At the time of her

injury the neighbors who had her in charge turned her gladly over to me. She's an attractive little witch, Mary," said the good doctor, his voice breaking unmistakably, "so I thought, I imagined—"

The doctor's wife had her arms around the doctor's neck before he could finish the sentence.

"Oh, my dear!" she whispered, "a little girl such as that might be our grand-child; do you realize it? We are old people, you and I; we ought to have a grand-child. I haven't been to see her, because I've been letting my mind dwell too much on little Alice, while I should have thought of the living little girl. But I've sent her gifts, you know that I have, and now I want her. Tell me when I may bring her home?"

The doctor took his wife's hands gently in his.

"Do you know, Mary, I have a fancy"—and he smiled at the fancy, as he spoke—"that I would rather you should wait until the Sunbeams finish their good work. Don't go to see Bettina yet. Let me prepare a surprise for you. She is happy where she is, and I want to bring her to you perfectly well."

"If that is all, I can give her a roomful of Sunbeams, too," said the doctor's wife, smiling back at him, "and, what is more, I'll begin my

preparations at once. It may take several days to gather together everything one needs for a grandchild."

In fact, the preparations that were immediately begun in the doctor's house were more like those of a fairy god-mother than of a real or an adopted grandmother, and the interest the Sunbeams felt in them knew no bounds. To and fro between the Memorial Room at the hospital and the dainty new room in Bettina's new home the Sunbeams journeyed, their strongest temptation, which was to chatter indiscreetly about what was going on, remaining ungratified. You see, whether or not they would have done anything so unfair, they were unable to betray the doctor's secret in Italian.

"It makes it a hundred times easier to behave ourselves," said the Once Naughty Sunbeam, regretfully, "but I like to try harder when I want to be good. Everything we do to amuse Bettina, we do, after all, to please ourselves."

His brothers shoved him off the edge of Bettina's crib, and rolled him over and over on the floor.

"You told us to wrestle with you so that Bettina shouldn't think we were lazy," they shouted in delight at catching him off his guard. "Don't worry about your goodness, little brother," we'll

have plenty of hard work to make Bettina well in time for—" and here the Sunbeams spoke suddenly beneath their breath. They had very nearly talked aloud about the doctor's secret.

Through Bettina's outstretched fingers they nimbly ran, letting her catch and lose them in the game of tag which she loved. The healthful flush that rose to her cheeks they kissed and coaxed into staying there. When the doctor came that morning he stood awhile in the doorway to watch the pretty picture.

"Play with the Sunbeams all they'll let you, Bettina," he called gaily, "their cure is worth pounds upon pounds of mine. But now, little woman, we're to sit up in a chair to-day for the first time; did you remember it? The Sunbeams will stay with you, never fear; they are good for an hour longer."

That first attempt at sitting in a chair was soon followed by a few steps across the floor, and before many days the doctor, Miss Williams, and the Sunbeams guided Bettina to the window, where she looked out upon the young green of the old twisted tree, every bud of which had opened a tender leaf. "That is some of our work, little Bettina," the Sunbeams whispered proudly, hoping she might understand, and the child smiled, as if in answer, telling "Dottor Maccaroni," also in a

whisper. that the "Prettee Sunbeams were varee, varee good to everybodee," she was sure.

Then on one great and never-to-be-forgotten day, Miss Williams tearfully dressed Bettina, and "Dottor Maccaroni" called in state to take her for a drive. The Sun was shining brilliantly and the air was sweet with Spring. In their most festive array the band of Sunbeams stood ready to escort the doctor's carriage. It was Easter morning, and along the streets throngs of people were passing on their way to church. The doctor's horses moved slowly over the cobblestones, until they came to the asphalt pavement of Madison Avenue, where they trotted easily along, and then, on a sudden, they stopped. There was no need for the secret to be kept a moment longer.

"You're to be the doctor's little girl, Bettina," called the Sunbeams, in a desperate hurry to tell the great news they had struggled to keep quiet about so long. "This is the house you're to live in, and the doctor's wife is ready to love you dearly. There is a room upstairs expressly for you, where we are all to spend the morning hours together. Isn't it *too* lovely, Bettina, isn't it *too* lovely?"

Bettina turned a bewildered little face to the doctor to understand. That delicate, sweet music she so often heard nowadays seemed nearer and

sounded to her ear more and more like the language she was trying faithfully to learn. What did it all mean? What fresh happiness had come to her?

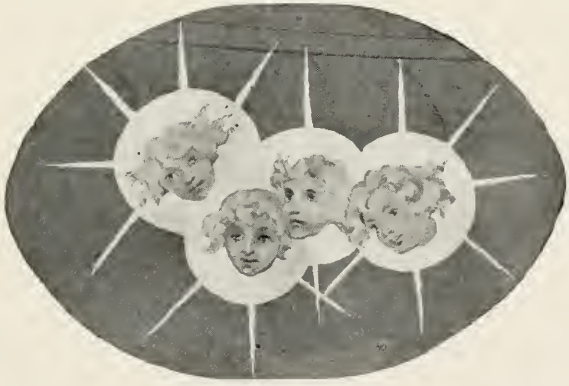
The doctor took the child into his arms and kissed her questioning eyes.

"Your friends, the Sunbeams, deserve great credit for not betraying my secret long ago, little woman," he said, jestingly, never dreaming of the truth that lay in his words. "Inside of this house Some One is waiting to welcome you. Take this bunch of lilies and hold it as well as you can, while you walk your prettiest at my side. Carry the flowers with both hands, sweetheart; it is a big burden, purposely. I want you as the central lily, and you'll have to be half hidden. Some One whom you're sure to love the moment you set eyes upon her, is very fond of flowers, so you are my Easter offering."

The house-door opened. Some One must have been listening for the carriage wheels, for on the instant Bettina was caught close to a mother's heart, and the door was shut again upon three of the happiest persons in the city. The delighted Sunbeams were of necessity left outside, but they didn't resent it in the least. The Once Naughty Sunbeam drew a deep breath of content.

"We didn't behave exactly right to Nelly last

summer when we ran off with her to the woods," he said, "and after we had quite made up our minds to be good last winter, we couldn't keep poor little Tom Riley warm enough to prevent his falling asleep in the snow. But we did him one good turn, little brothers, and that deserved another. We've helped Bettina to get well, the doctor says that we have, and now let us hurry back to the hospital to look after more sick little children for Easter Day. Bettina isn't going upstairs to her new room this morning. We'll visit her as early as the Sun will allow us to-morrow." So the Sunbeams danced off into the clear spring air and went their winsome way.



"It's wiser being good than bad;
It's safer being meek than fierce."—Browning.

Daisy

Daisy

"YES, she's dear Helen's child," Grandma was saying, her hand on the door-knob, her head turned toward the visitor whom she was ushering into the room, "and she's Helen all over; the pink of propriety and neatness; so obedient, so trustworthy! But you must see her. She's somewhere in the barn with her pets, I fancy; I send——

"Margaret ! !" Grandma stood still. The visitor stood still. In the middle of the room, with Grandma's precious old Dresden teapot in her hand —a teapot Grandma would have died rather than brew tea in—stood a little girl; and when Grandma ejaculated that terrible "Margaret ! !" crash went the teapot into a thousand pieces on the polished floor.

"Oh! my teapot, my teapot!" wailed Grandma. "No, child; don't come near me. I'm too angry to trust myself to reprove you. Go to the barn; go anywhere. Don't come to me till I call you, and never enter this room alone again. Do you understand?"

It made no difference what Grandma said or did now. The worst was over. Daisy knew her

baptismal name, but in all her little petted life she had never been called by it before. No wonder she had dropped the teapot. She had been pouring only "make-believe" tea into "make-believe" cups. She had not put even water into the precious china, for she knew Grandma never used that teapot; and now she left the room slowly and sadly; and, while the two ladies were gathering up the Dresden pieces, she went out to the back porch and seated herself on the steps leading into the kitchen garden.

She was dressed in a curious little gown which she had discovered in a trunk upstairs, and she had on a battered straw hat she had found down at the barn. All the morning she had been playing that she was an Arabian Nights' princess in disguise. A peacock's feather, waving majestically from the crown of her hat, was her secret badge of royalty. She forgot her game; she forgot everything but that she had broken Grandma's teapot, and that Grandma had called her "Margaret!!" What should she do? Would Grandma allow her to live in the barn with the cows and the old horse and the chickens? She had four or five cats to love her there. She could be happy with them, if Grandma —but Grandma would *never* forgive her. It was impossible.

Daisy's lip quivered, and her eyes filled with

tears. She was far too unhappy to cry aloud, and that, for a little girl, is to be very unhappy indeed. She dropped her hot face between her hands and sat awhile thinking. Then she had an inspiration. Something could be done, something she could do, something that she resolved she *would* do that minute. She sprang to her feet, almost happy again.

From the sitting-room window Grandma saw the little figure trudge in the direction of the barn, and her heart hardened. Decidedly, it is best not to forgive a child too readily. Daisy, miserable, on the steps of the back porch, was different from Daisy, full of purpose and resolution, hurrying to forget her troubles among her pets. So Grandma reasoned; but Grandma had not stopped to think that the mind of a child may be as difficult to read as that of a man or a woman. At a distance, and from the back of Daisy's head, it was impossible to tell what Daisy meant to do, while it was as plain as a pikestaff that she was not yet ready to ask forgiveness, and until she was, Grandma would not—I beg Grandma's pardon, I meant to say, could not—forgive her, for the world.

The barn was a delightful place. In its way it was as old-fashioned and charming as the dwelling-house. It had a wild-flower garden of its own in the meadow close by where the cows stood, and

through the meadow ran a brook—*perfect* for wading—while beyond was a peach orchard, the bare remembrance of which after peach season was enough to make one's mouth water. But those were outside attractions. They might be termed the natural advantages, the mere beauties of the neighborhood; inside there was a hay-loft!

Oh, the needles that Daisy had searched for in that hay-loft, when she practiced her sewing there on rainy days! And the eggs that the hens had hidden there and clucked and chuckled over, and that Daisy always found quicker than anybody! And the kittens that had been born there! And the cats that those kittens had grown to be! Grandma's orders that not more than five cats should permanently reside in the barn were imperative, and Daisy would not allow Grandma's coachman, her sworn ally, to drown a kitten, so it was no easy matter to find homes for the extra cats. Sooner or later, however, homes were found, and those who loved Daisy called her "persistent." Perhaps she was; it was the only straightforward and nice method she knew of getting her own way.

But to-day Daisy did not go to the barn for amusement. She scarcely noticed the cats when they purred and rubbed against her legs, nor the horse when he whinnied as she passed his stall.

She went straight to a diminutive chest of drawers, unlocked a *very* private drawer—the only one, in fact, that had a lock with a key to it—and drew out a tin bank, the contents of which she emptied into her lap. Five bright new dimes! They all were there, and Daisy heaved her fat little shoulders in a sigh of relief. That sum would buy Grandma a teapot; a "rare old Dresden teapot," too.

All the way to the village Daisy softly repeated to herself what she wanted, until she reached Mr. Hucks' hardware shop; then she went up to Mr. Hucks at the counter and asked aloud, most creditably:

"Have you any rare old *Desden* teapots to sell, Mr. Hucks?"

Mr. Hucks' spectacles slid the length of his nose. He readjusted them to stare at her.

"Good morning, Miss Daisy, good morning. Well, well, you are growed up! Down here by yourself, too. Any *what* did you want?"

"Any rare—old—*Desden*—teapots," repeated Daisy, with great distinctness.

At that Mr. Hucks took off his spectacles and rubbed the top of his head. "Well," said he, thoughtfully, "I shouldn't be surprised if I had some somewhere; but I can't think on a suddent where I've put 'em. I've got every sort of teapot likely to be wanted by anybody. *Desden*! *Des-*

den! If you looked at a lot, now, could you pick out what you mean?"

"It's got to be little and fat," said Daisy, eagerly, stretching on tiptoes in her excitement. "An' it's got to have roses all over it, teeny, weeny roses, an' a gold ball on top to lift the cover off by, an'—an' it's got to be the kind that won't break, no matter what you do."

The pucker between Mr. Hucks' eyebrows flattened itself out.

"This one here, maybe, is too small," he said, taking down a teapot from the row on the shelf behind him. "This one here, maybe, is too big. This one *here*—" he paused. Daisy thought of the little pig that went to market, the little pig that stayed at home, and the little pig that cried "Wee wee;" but she said nothing. Her eyes grew big. Her breath came fast. "This one here," repeated Mr. Hucks impressively, "*Desden* or no *Desden*, you couldn't break if you was to roll it down hill. See the roses! Two of 'em, there are; one for each side, nat'ral as life. Now look!"

Mr. Hucks held the teapot at arm's length and deliberately let it fall. It seemed almost as if he had flung it to the ground. The cover came off and rolled one way; the teapot rolled another. A trifle awkwardly Mr. Hucks stooped and picked them both up. He replaced the cover, and handed

Daisy the teapot with a flourish. Not a crack! Not a nick! It was intact.

"O-oh!" said Daisy in delight. Then a fear seized her, and the silver clutched in her hot little fingers grew moist and sticky. "Is it 'spensive?" she faltered.

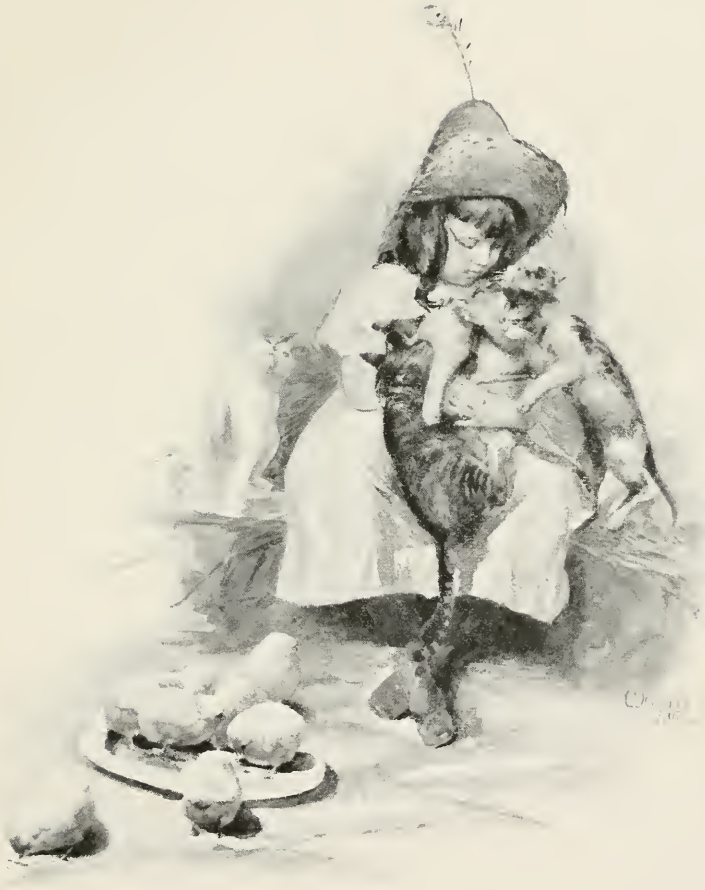
"Thirty-five cents to *all* kinds of grown people, and thirty cents to *some* kinds of little girls," answered Mr. Hucks, jocosely.

Daisy counted out the money, and the teapot was wrapped in brown paper. When Mr. Hucks, still jocose, inquired: "Anything else to-day, madam?" she answered, "No, Mr. Hucks, thank you," with the manner that had made Grandma call her the pink of propriety. She could be dignified on most occasions—except, perhaps, when Grandma was angry with her.

Home she trudged again, but this time the road seemed very long and very dusty. A teapot that won't break when it is dropped is likely to be heavy to carry. The sturdiest of legs that are accustomed to run about all day will grow tired by night, while unusual exertion may make them tired by afternoon. Daisy thought of the hay-loft where she intended to live, and of a small white bedroom that opened out of Grandma's room, and that was so comfortable at night, and such a pleasant place to wake up in in the morning. At that moment, if the

barn had not loomed before her so that she could see its friendly doors, Daisy might have sat down in the road and cried. As it was, she stumbled, nearly dropping the teapot—which wouldn't have harmed it in the least, of course—and she called, "Muffin, Rowdy, Dandy," in a weak little voice that was answered by a chorus of purrs. A bench stood against the barn. Daisy clambered upon it and took all her furry friends into her arms at once. Is there any sound more comforting than a cat's purr? Yes, five cats' purrs. Five cats make more noise than one cat, and five soft bodies, with five pairs of cheerful, shining eyes, combined with the five purrs, will sweep most sorrows from a little girl's heart, and make her forget more teapots than she could break in a week. The cats cuddled in Daisy's lap, and on her shoulders, and prepared to take a nap. The example was contagious. In five minutes——

Half an hour later grandma found her. Michael had been out with the horse to scour the country. Jane, the cook, had left no berry bush unexamined, no orchard tree unshaken. Eliza, the housemaid, had looked into every corner of the garret, and had opened every trunk. The barn had been the first place thought of. After dark Grandma went there again, and there she found her.



"SHE TOOK ALL HER FURRY FRIENDS INTO HER ARMS AT ONCE."

"Is it morning?" Daisy asked drowsily; for Grandma's kisses felt exactly as they did in the little white bedroom at breakfast time.

"No, darling; but we must go home. Where have you been, my precious? Tell Grandma all about it," and Daisy felt Grandma's tears upon her cheek.

It was the teapot! Grandma was crying for the teapot!

"I've bought another one," said Daisy, wide awake now, clinging about Grandma's neck; it would be too dreadful if Grandma ran away before she had time to explain, "an' I've bought one as pretty as pretty can be, an' I will never break it, Grandma, 'cause it *can't* break. Please look at it, please, please. You'll forgive me if you look.

But Grandma forgave her before looking.

"Books cannot always please, however good;
Minds are not ever craving for their food."—CRABBE.

The Surprise

The Surprise

AROUND the big chimney-place in Uncle Hugh's "den" the children were making themselves at home. Uncle Hugh's pet monkey, Jocko—purchased, Uncle Hugh said, simply to console him during the absence of nephews and nieces—swung solemnly by his tail from an apparatus which his master had made for that purpose, and watched the young people from the corners of his queer little bright eyes.

It was Christmas Eve. Santa Claus had always a tremendous amount of work in the Southwick family, so the children had to be hustled into Uncle Hugh's den to keep them out of the good saint's way. They were put upon their honor not to open the door, and not to peep into the hall, no matter what mysterious noises might tempt them. There were six children in all: Hugh, named after Uncle Hugh; Ethel, after Aunt Ethel; Lucinda, named after Grandma, and known disrespectfully as Cinder; Robert, Grandpa's namesake and particular chum; Richard, called Dick, to distinguish him from Papa, and little Alf, named in memory of Uncle Alfred who had died.

All of these children actually belonged to

Grandma and Grandpa's eldest son, Richard Southwick and his wife Mary; but so far back as they could remember they had been borrowed regularly every Christmas by Grandma and Grandpa, to be returned after the holidays, if in a somewhat damaged condition, still sufficiently alive to look forward with longing to the fun of another year.

This Christmas something more extraordinary than usual was to happen. Ethel sat with Cinder in Uncle Hugh's arm-chair to the right of the chimney, her flaxen head close against her sister's brown one, exchanging whispered conjectures as to what the Surprise might be. The boys sat cross-legged in a row before the fire. What puzzled the young people so greatly was that Betty should be in the secret.

"Betty has behaved in the queerest way ever since we came," declared Ethel, leaning over the arm of the chair to address the audience on the hearth-rug. "Last Christmas she was like other dogs. She loved to play and run around with us; but now she's everlastingly in and out of the library. Grandma lets her in, Aunt Ethel lets her in, and yesterday Grandpa and Uncle Hugh both laughed when they saw her making awful scratches on the library door. 'Poor old doggie! you want to get in, don't you?' was every word they said; and they let her in, too."

Robert gave a low whistle, and stretched his legs. "I'll give it up," he said. "I can't guess what the Surprise will be. The only thing I know is that we're to hang up our stockings at this chimney, and to-morrow morning early we're to come for them; then, late after breakfast, Uncle Hugh will unlock the library where the Surprise is. You're funny children if you can't wait one night more."

Robert was the eldest. He had a superior way with him that was often irritating. Dick relieved the feelings of the company by throwing a sticky marshmallow drop straight at Robert's head.

"You're not so terribly old, Bobby, that you don't want to see the Surprise as much as anybody. Hullo! Here come the grown-ups. Going to send us off to bed, Grandma?"

Uncle Hugh's little nieces slipped from their chair and ran and caught him lovingly by the hand.

"No coaxing," said Grandpa, sternly, from behind Uncle Hugh's broad shoulders. "Off to bed? I should think so! Scat! Santa Claus has another engagement. He won't fill a stocking that's not ready within the next five minutes."

Grandpa pulled out his watch with so serious an air that the children flew. In less than five minutes six stockings hung in a row and the six

little folks had vanished. The older people burst out laughing. As a precaution, however, against anyone's unexpected return, Uncle Hugh double-locked the door.

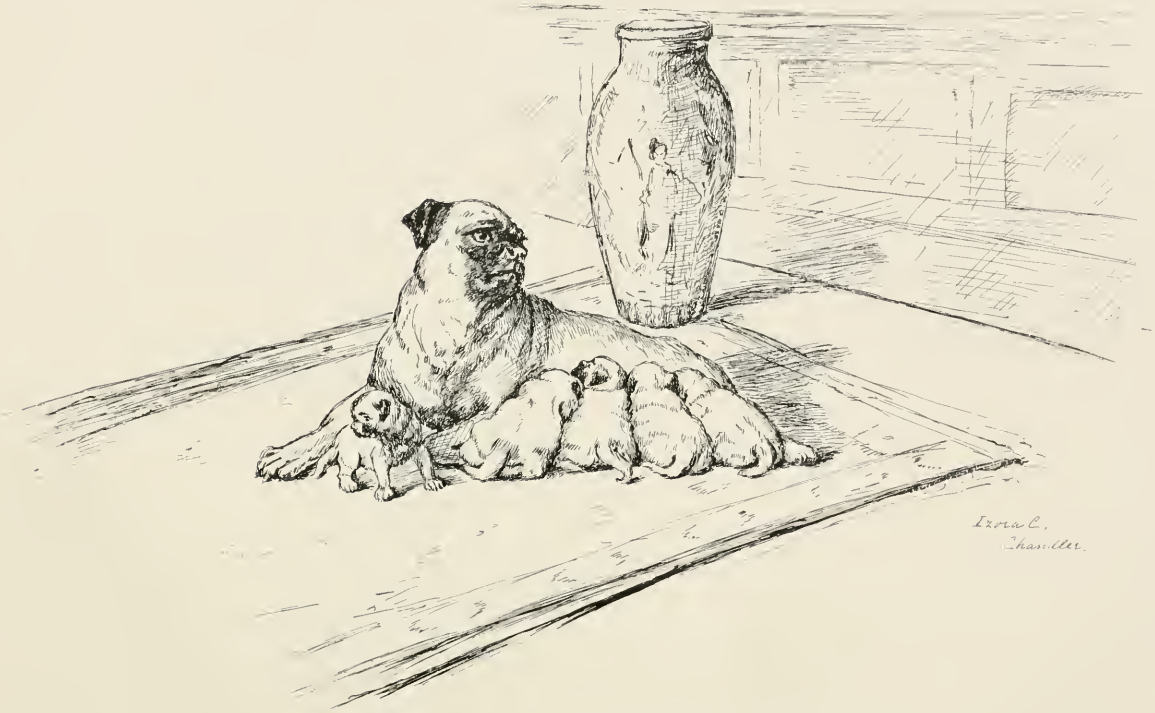
"Now to work!" he cried cheerily. "Fill the stockings, Ethel; I'll pile the books and the big toys into separate heaps. But mother, mother! how you spoil your grandchildren! You must have bought out most of the shops in New York, as well as the entire village."

A flush mounted in Grandma's cheeks.

"I had to give an even number of toys, Hugh. The only really extravagant thing I've bought is that set of Shakespeare for Robert. No matter what you say, Robert is sure to be disappointed that there are not puppies enough to go around. He must have something extra from his grandmother."

"Oh, those puppies!" exclaimed Aunt Ethel, between a laugh and a groan. "Such a time as I've had concealing them! Betty's maternal pride has almost betrayed her. Mother has had the word puppy on the tip of her tongue a dozen times a day. Hugh declares that his shins are black and blue from the kicks I've had to give him from under the table."

"Five puppies to divide among six children," commented Grandpa, thoughtfully, "and my name-



"ON A RUG IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FLOOR LAY BETTY."

sake is the fellow to be left out, eh? Well, well! we'll see how he'll behave about it. Six children that are over-fond of animals are more than most mothers would pretend to put up with. Mary little knows what is before her. She ought to have refused up and down to accept the entire litter."

Their work over, the grown people were glad enough to go to bed. The breakfast the next day was considerably later than that of ordinary mornings, and the children's patience was cruelly taxed before the great event of unlocking the library door. Aunt Ethel led the way; Grandpa kept his arm about Robert; Grandma took little Alf, and Uncle Hugh marched along with his two nieces. Betty was nowhere to be found.

"Where can she have gone, Aunt Ethel? Call her, call her!" the children begged; but Aunt Ethel only smiled and threw wide the library door.

"Oh!" came in one estatic burst, "oh! oh!"

On a rug in the middle of the floor lay Betty. With an eye to artistic effect Aunt Ethel had placed Grandma's finest India vase to serve as background, and Grandma could not find it in her heart to reprove her. But the children cared nothing for background. What they saw was the turn of Betty's head, the look of love, of pride, of welcoming joy on Betty's face, and at Betty's side, five pup-

pies—five little pug puppies, without exception the sweetest, cunningest things they had ever seen.

After that cry of delight there was silence. Aunt Ethel, kneeling on the rug, lifted each puppy in turn, to discover little cards which were inscribed with the children's names. Robert, Grandpa drew closer to his side. "There are five puppies, Bob, my boy," he whispered, "and you're the eldest grandchild. We'll let the little folks have a puppy apiece, won't we? You don't want to add to your menagerie of pet animals."

But Bob began the most astonishing squirmings in Grandpa's arms, and before anyone could think, much less say, Jack Robinson, the boy was out of the room and had rushed upstairs.

"Look here, you people," said Grandpa, hotly —he was a quick-tempered old gentleman—"I won't have it! Do you understand me? I simply *won't* have it! You've got to give up some of your ridiculous notions on Christmas Day. That boy doesn't want any calf-bound Shakespeare; he wants a live animal. He's better able to care for one than the younger children are. I don't propose to take back the presents that have been given, but I *do* propose that Bob shall have either Betty or Jocko."

Grandpa wheeled around to confront his daughter; then he faced his son-in-law.

"Which shall it be, Ethel? Which shall it be, Hugh?—Betty or Jocko?" His voice rang out like a clarion, and the children were too frightened to stir.

"Jocko!" said Uncle Hugh, with his jolly laugh that made everybody around him comfortable. "Jocko, father, is out of the question. I have solemnly vowed to these young ones' mother that Jocko should never enter her family. She will accept kittens, puppies, and even full-grown dogs, but not Jocko."

Aunt Ethel turned to Grandma.

"Mother, let us be noble. The only course left is not to separate Betty from her babies, and everyone will be happy. I'll give Betty to Robert; you may give him the tree-calf Shakespeare."

While the discussion was going on, eager fingers were plucking at Uncle Hugh's coat-sleeve, until at last Uncle Hugh bent his head. Ethel put her lips to his ear and whispered something, the answer to which was a smile and a quick nod. Like a flash Ethel disappeared, returning hand-in-hand with Robert, and before nightfall of that Christmas Day the memory of the fifteen minutes in which there had seemed too few presents to go around in the Southwick family, was blotted out forever.

NOTE.—Thanks are due to the editor of *Our Animal Friends* for permission to republish the stories of "Daisy" and "The Surprise," which originally appeared in that magazine.

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